

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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R 231118Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8248
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
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AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJECT: SITUATION IN THE CONGRESS STILL MURKY WITH NO
RESOLUTION IN SIGHT

REF: NEW DELHI 18097

1. THE SHARP POWER STRUGGLE WITHIN THE CONGRESS PARTY
WHICH WAS PRECIPITATED LAST WEEKEND BY MRS. GANDHI'S
RESIGNATION FROM THE WORKING COMMITTEE (REFTEL) HAS
CONTINUED TO DOMINATE POLITICAL ACTIVITY HERE FORE
THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS, WITH NO RESOLUTION YET IN
SIGHT. THE CHANCES OF AN OUTRIGHT PARTY SPLIT IN
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THE NEAR FUTURE HAVE SEE-SAWED BACK AND FORTH AS
EMISSARIES SOUGHT TO RECONCILE THE PRO AND ANTI-
MRS. GANDHI FACTIONS. MRS. GANDHI'S SUPPORTERS
TOOK THE CONGRESS CLOSER TO THE BRINK ON DECEMBER 21 BY
CALLING FOR A PARTY "CONVENTION" TO BE HELD
DECEMBER 31/JANUARY 1. ALTHOUGH THE PRO-INDIRA
CAMP BACKPEDALED SLIGHTLY BY LATER EXPLAINING THAT

THIS WOULD BE AN INFORMAL GATHERING TO DISCUSS PARTY AFFAIRS, THE "CONVENTION" IDEA STRUCK MOST OBSERVERS AS BEING TANTAMOUNT TO A PARALLEL AICC MEETING, THE FIRST STEP IN A FORMAL PARTY SPLIT.

2. AS THE WEEK COMES TO A CLOSE, THE SITUATION IS BEST DESCRIBED AS MURKY. NO ONE HERE, NOT EVEN SENIOR CONGRESSMEN WITH WHOM WE HAVE BEEN TALKING, HAS A CLEAR IDEA HOW THE CURRENT IMBROGLIO WILL SORT ITSELF OUT. MOST OBSERVERS AND MANY CONGRESSMEN ARE NOW CONVINCED THAT A SPLIT WILL TAKE PLACE, IF NOT IN A WEEK, THEN AT A LATER DATE. THE ONE FACTOR WHICH MAY CAUSE MRS. GANDHI AND HER LOYALISTS TO PAUSE BEFORE REACHING THE BRINK IS THE LIMITED SUPPORT WHICH SHE GENERATED BY HER WORKING COMMITTEE RESIGNATION. ONLY A HANDFUL OF CONGRESS FIGURES SHOWED UP AT THE DECEMBER 20 MEETING CALLED TO PLAN FUTURE STRATEGY FOR THE PRO-INDIRA GROUP, AND FEW OF THESE WERE RECOGNIZED AS INFLUENTIAL LEADERS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT EVEN SOME OF HER ARDENT LOYALISTS UP TO LAST WEEKEND ARE WAVERING NOW THAT THEY ARE FACED WITH THE VERY REAL POSSIBILITY OF HAVING TO CHOOSE SIDES IN AN OPEN BREAK. NONETHELESS, WE HEAR THAT PLANS FOR FORMING MRS. GANDHI'S NEW BREAK-AWAY PARTY ARE CONTINUING AND THAT THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEES FOR THE YEAR-END "CONVENTION" LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ARE BEING SET UP IN SUCH A WAY AS TO FACILITATE THEIR TRANSFORMATION INTO THE FUNCTIONAL COMMITTEES OF THE NEW PARTY. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT IN COMING TO THE CONCLUSION THAT MRS. GANDHI WILL PRECIPITATE A SPLIT, SEVERAL INCISIVE OBSERVERS CITE WHAT THEY BELIEVE IS THE KEY ROLE OF SANJAY GANDHI IN PERSUADING HIS MOTHER TO PURSUE THAT COURSE. SANJAY, THEY BELIEVE, WOULD INEVITABLY BE A DOMINANT FIGURE IN THE BREAKAWAY INDIRA GROUP. IT IS SOMETHING TO PONDER OVER THE CHRISTMAS WEEKEND.
GOHEEN

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Sent Date: 23-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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